



**Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities**  
*Frank E. Shelp, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner*

**Division of Mental Health**

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**Date/Time:**

**APRIL 9, 2012**

Training starts at 10am; Ends at 3pm;  
Sign-in begins at 9am

**Location:**

**ATLANTA, GA**

The State Bar of Georgia  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Auditorium  
104 Marietta Street,  
Atlanta, GA 30303

**Directions:**

[http://gabar.org/public/pdf/Map\\_to\\_Building1.pdf](http://gabar.org/public/pdf/Map_to_Building1.pdf)

**Register Online at:**

<http://www.cviog.uga.edu/dbhdd/pss.php>

This registration link is dedicated to the  
Critical Issues Facing Special Needs and  
At-Risk Children and Youth:  
9<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar Series

**Registration Deadline:**  
**April 6, 2012**

**Audience:**

The seminar series is designed to promote interdisciplinary dialogue and to be inclusive of all parties that support children and youth, parents, foster parents and community organizations, local government entities, state departments and their contracted provider organizations.

**Cost:**

There is no charge to attend.

**Questions?** Contact Regina Ginyard  
[RegistrationMHDDAD@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:RegistrationMHDDAD@dhr.state.ga.us)

**TRAINING ANNOUNCEMENT**

9th Annual Professional Seminar Series:  
**CRITICAL ISSUES FACING SPECIAL NEEDS AND  
AT-RISK CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

*(Seminar Topic 6 of 6)*

**Supporting At-Risk Youth:  
Identifying and Confronting Obstacles to Mental Health  
Services and Resources for the Long Haul**

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities' Suicide Prevention Program, in partnership with the Supreme Court of Georgia's Committee on Justice for Children, the Marcus Autism Center at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, and the Georgia Alliance to End Homelessness is pleased to announce the 9th Annual Professional Seminar Series. *Supporting At-Risk Youth: Identifying and Confronting Obstacles to Mental Health Services and Resources for the Long Haul* will be the sixth of six seminars within this series.

**Presenters:**

**Stephanie L. Pearson, Ph.D** is the Clinical and Quality Director in the Division of Mental Health, Child and Adolescent Services, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD).

**Sue L. Smith, Ed.D** is a founding member of the Georgia Parent Support Network, and is the President of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health.

**Charles Willis** is the Statewide Peer Wellness Initiative Director for the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Support Network.

**See attached training description of this seminar and presenter bios for more details.**

**CEUs:**

CEU application submitted to the School of Social Work at UGA - there will be no charge to participants. We are also seeking Continuing Legal Education Units (CLE's). There is a fee for CLE's. CEU's from the Georgia Psychological Association are NOT available for this training.

**Parking:**

The State Bar of Georgia has an adjacent parking deck; the fee is **\$8.00 per day**.

## TRAINING DESCRIPTION AND PRESENTER BIOS

### 2011-2012: 9th Annual Seminar Series **Critical Issues Facing Special Needs and At-risk Children**

The purpose of this series is to provide individuals who work with special needs and at-risk children, including professionals and family members, with an understanding of the experiences of at-risk children and associated interventions; these may include pharmacological, behavioral and family interventions. Each seminar topic will reference the risk of suicide in children and provide resources for suicide prevention. There are six seminars offered in this series. Below is a description of the topics that will be presented in the sixth seminar titled *Supporting At-Risk Youth: Identifying and Confronting Obstacles to Mental Health Services and Resources for the Long Haul*.

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### ***Supporting At-Risk Youth: Identifying and Confronting Obstacles to Mental Health Services and Resources for the Long Haul***

**April 9, 2012**

#### ***Topic #1 - Identifying and Confronting Obstacles to Mental Health Services***

Among adolescents, suicide ranks as the third leading cause of death, behind unintentional injury and homicide. Given the range of risk factors associated with suicide, prevention efforts must be multifaceted. Successful prevention efforts seek to minimize risk factors and maximize protective factors. These include effective clinical care for mental, physical and substance abuse disorders; family and community support; and promoting skills in problem solving, conflict resolution and nonviolent handling of disputes.

Addressing the overall health of children has demonstrated success. Providing effective, targeted and community-based mental health services for children and adolescents who are identified to be at risk for suicide is the primary suicide prevention tactic. Research shows that early intervention strategies that target risk factors for depression, substance abuse and aggressive behaviors and building resiliency have promise in preventing youth suicide.

#### ***(Presenter - Stephanie L. Pearson, PH.D)***

Dr. Stephanie Pearson is a licensed clinical psychologist working as the Clinical and Quality Director in the Division of Mental Health, Child and Adolescent Services, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), since May 2009. In this capacity, Dr. Pearson has responsibility for the Outdoor Therapeutic Program, which serves youth with behavioral health challenges in a wilderness environment. Dr. Pearson also works closely with colleagues in providing oversight for monitoring fidelity and quality of service deliverables for Child & Adolescent (C&A) mental health providers across the state. Additionally, Dr. Pearson represents the State office on a number of strategic planning groups and state advisory groups comprised of C&A child-serving partners and other stakeholders. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Pearson served in a variety of positions with a large public provider of mental health and substance abuse services, most notably as the Child and Adolescent Services Director, for a total of fourteen years. In this capacity, Dr. Pearson supervised clinical staff who assessed and treated children and adolescents with a variety of emotional health concerns, via individual, family, and group therapy. Dr. Pearson's own direct care experience over the past twenty-

five years includes an emphasis on a similar population, having treated these children both in the public and private sectors in Georgia, and in southern California. Dr. Pearson earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. Subsequently, Dr. Pearson was also awarded the Master of Arts degree, and the Doctorate degree, both in Psychology, from Emory University, Atlanta.

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## ***Topic #2 - Resources for the Long Haul***

Both the Georgia Parent Support Network (GPSN) and the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network (GMHCN) provide guidance and supports to individuals and families living with mental health diagnoses. It is important for these individuals and families to have an integrated treatment plan for long term care and sustainability. This session will provide information about the health conditions and modifiable risk factors associated with consumers of mental health services, as well as peer- based interventions designed to support individuals in changing life style behaviors to promote overall health and wellness. A comprehensive approach must be taken, taking into account all of life's aspects including stress management, social networks, jobs, housing and other activities.

### ***(Presenter - Sue L. Smith, Ed. D)***

Sue Smith is well-known and respected in Georgia and at the national level for her expertise in children's services, advocacy and education. She is a founding member of the Georgia Parent Support Network, and has been recognized for her work as the recipient of the 1995 Tipper Gore Remember the Children Award, 1994 Mental Health Association of Georgia Child Advocate Award, and the 1996 Rosalynn Carter Care Giver Award. Sue is the President of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health and the Past Chair of the Mental Health Planning Council of Georgia. In addition, Sue has consulted with the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Macro International, Georgetown University, many states as well as several regions in Georgia regarding issues surrounding children with severe emotional disturbances and the delivery of services to these families and children. She obtained her Doctor of Education 2000 and has since taught a course at Harvard University. She is the foster mother of two daughters with severe emotional disturbances.

### ***(Presenter - Charles Willis)***

Charles Willis is the Georgia Peer Support Resiliency Project Director with the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network, an organization that promotes recovery through advocacy, education, employment empowerment, peer support, and self-help. His work in the area of self-directed recovery has led him to become an Advanced Level Wrap Facilitator through the Copeland Center. He is an enthusiastic individual with over 20 years of successful, results-oriented experience in the helping professions of education and facilitation. In addition, Mr. Willis has worked as a Senior Research Interviewer with Emory University Grace Crum Rollins School of Public Health. Mr. Willis has undergraduate and master's degrees from Fort Valley State University. He has completed the Georgia Certified Peer Specialist Training, which is a project of the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network and the Department of Human Resources Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases. He has earned the credential of a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner from the U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association. He is a member of the Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council (MHPAC), board member of Mental Health America of Georgia, and a member of the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Advisory Council.